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RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0395
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 2108
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0261
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1870
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2440
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL 0351
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/05/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: HAITI: PRESIDENT LASHES US DRUG POLICY IN FRONT OF
UN OFFICIAL

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson. Reason: E.O. 12958 1.4
(b), (d)

¶1. (C) UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay visited Haiti the week of November 3 and met with President Preval that day. MINUSTAH Director for Human Rights Lizbeth Cullity (protect) told the Ambassador and PolCouns November 3 and 4 that Preval refused to engage the Commissioner on human rights, to the point of rudeness. He argued that promoting human rights in Haiti was pointless, and that international community efforts to promote rule of law and strengthen the judiciary were useless, unless drug trafficking was suppressed. Government of Haiti salaries for judges and policemen could not compete with the money drug traffickers offered.

¶2. (C) Preval laid the blame for this situation solely on the U.S. and its failure to reduce demand for drugs. As long as there is a demand for drugs, Preval told the Commissioner, growers and salesmen will materialize to bring it to those consumers. The Commissioner suggested that the U.S. could do more in Haiti to suppress the drug trade, as it was doing in Colombia. Preval retorted that all depended on stopping demand for drugs in the main consuming country. He pointed to a 1998 agreement with then Secretary of State Albright giving the U.S. the right to intercept drug boats in Haitian waters, and complained that the interception rate for boat people seeking to escape Haiti was close to 100 percent, far higher than the rate for craft carrying narcotics.

¶3. (C) Cullity noted that Commissioner Pillay appeared not to have been well briefed. The Commissioner wondered why the U.S. did not develop a counter-drug assistance plan for Haiti on the order of a "Plan Colombia." She had also visited the Port-au-Prince slum of Cite Soleil (Note: an area formerly ruled by gangs as a refuge for criminals, where police never set foot until MINUSTAH reasserted control in late 2006-early 2007. End Note.) Seeing rampant poverty and crowds of idle, ill-clothed youth and children, Pillay complained that no one was taking responsibility for this area. (Note: She was apparently unaware of the DOD-funded Haiti Stabilization Initiative and other international community aid projects in the slum, which have made inroads into poverty and improved security. End note)

14. (C) Comment: We suspect that High Commissioner Pillay may return to Geneva partially convinced that the U.S. "failure" to address Haiti's drug problem is the core human rights issue in Haiti. Embassy notes that President Preval increasingly uses the drug issue to evade discussion of virtually every reform the U.S. is pursuing in Haiti -- with the possible exception of Treasury Department assistance in combating money laundering. Preval has a habit of casually dismissing DEA efforts in Haiti and criticizing the U.S. for failing to catch major trafficker suspects in Haiti. The proceeds from narcotics transit through Haiti from South America on the way to U.S. and European markets indeed have infected Haiti's economy and body politic. The influence of drug money is a major, but by no means the only, obstacle to efforts to build and consolidate Haiti's democratic institutions.

SANDERSON